

Asleep?

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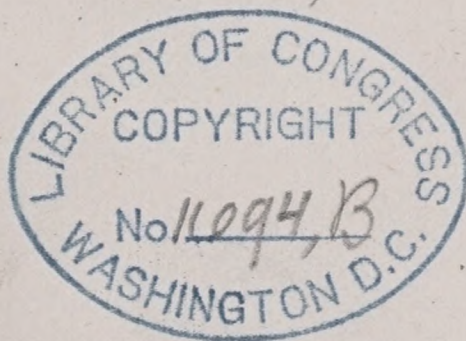
A S L E E P.

BY

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✓
Lriswold

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CHRISTMAS," ETC., ETC.



BROOKLYN, N. Y.:

T. B. VENTRES, 62 COURT STREET.

1871.

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EDWARD O. JENKINS,
PRINTER AND STEREOTYPER,
20 North William Street, N. Y.



THE SLEEP.

Of all the thoughts of God that are
Borne inward unto souls afar,
 Along the Psalmist's music deep,
Now tell me if that any is
For gift, or grace, surpassing this,
 " He giveth His beloved sleep."

What do we give to our beloved?
A little faith, all undisproved,
 A little dust to overweep,
And bitter memories to make
The whole earth blasted for our sake.
 " He giveth His beloved sleep."

"Sleep soft, beloved!" we sometimes say,
But have no tune to charm away
 Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber, when
 " He giveth His beloved sleep."

O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
 O delved gold, the wailer's heap!

O strife, O curse that o'er it fall !
God makes a silence through you all,
And "giveth His beloved sleep."

For me, my heart, that erst did go
Most like a tired child at a show,
That sees through tears the juggler's leap,
Would now its wearied vision close,
Would child-like on His love repose
Who "giveth His beloved sleep."

And friends, dear friends, when it shall be
That this low breath is gone from me,
And round my bier ye come to weep,
Let one, most loving of you all,
Say, "Not a tear must o'er her fall—
"He giveth His beloved sleep.'"



Dedicated

TO

MY MOTHER.



PREFACE.

I HAVE asked of a former pastor and ever esteemed friend, with whom I have often spoken of the eternal world, some written thoughts on death—that gate which leads to the beyond.

My request granted, it has been a puzzle where, in this volume of so little merit, to place that which will give the book a real value to many a soul.

The decision is, to put it at the end, as a worthy finish to what would otherwise lack much.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.





“Blessed are they that do His Commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.”

“And God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.”

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.”





A S L E E P .

CHAPTER I.

“Is it well with the child?” . . “It is well.”

“**L**ET me open the blinds, dear Maud, you know how our darling loved the sunshine; how she would stretch out her little hands to grasp it, and how she would creep eagerly to kiss the bright patch upon the floor. May I not admit a little light, sister? Baby never could bear a gloomy room.”

The young mother knelt in the darkness, beside her sleeping child. It was her first bitter grief. The little innocent had blessed her life for one short year, and then, our Lord Jesus took it up to His eternal em-

brace. In His bosom it slept. His arms of love were around it. Ah, how safe it was from this world's harm !

If mothers could but put aside their anguish, and see only the joy of the ransomed ! Yet this is not God's design for us. He wills that we shall feel the tearing away of the heart-tendrils as they cling too closely to the objects of our love. He knows that by the very strength of our affection, and the deep yearning grief, we shall be drawn after our beloved ones, until we reach them in the golden City. Is He not pitiful ?

Oh, yes, and of sweetest mercy. He does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men. He is with us in all our sorrows.

“He bends over us as bends a mother o'er her waking babe, and raising us tenderly, says, ‘my child.’ And then he draws us closer, and, Himself, with His own hand, His pierced hand of love, wipes the still falling tear-drops from our face, and tells us we are His and He is ours, and how His Father loves us, and He loves.”

Maud paid no attention to her sister. With her face buried in the pillow where her baby lay, and her whole frame quivering with emotion, she thought only of the grave that had opened to receive her treasure.

Annie ventured to let one little ray fall upon the bed, and touch the sleeper's curls, but it smote like a sharp sword upon the mother's heart, as she looked up for a moment.

"Shut it out, Annie, the sun mocks me; I cannot bear it to-day. I shall never care to see it any more. My baby was my brightness. Oh God! Is she gone forever from my sight?"

"She is with my little Willie now. The children are happy together in Paradise; we shall go to them in God's good time, dear Maud, if we take patiently the trials that he sends. I am not chiding you, sister, for grieving so sadly. It would be a hard mother that could loose the tiny arms from her neck, and the little lips from her bosom, without many tears. You know how I re-

sisted when Willie must go, how I wrestled all night with God in earnest pleading; how long it was before I could kiss the hand that took my darling from me?"

"Oh, yes, you too have suffered, and I forgot it; forgive me, Annie."

"There is nothing to forgive. I had no thought of others when my heart was broken over my little child; community of sorrow does not make one's individual grief less keen when the blow first falls. It is only afterwards that we feel the preciousness of sympathy, when we can say to each other, 'I also have trodden the *via dolorosa*.'"

"The baby seems to rejoice in this beautiful sun," continued the aunt, twining a shining lock of hair around her finger, and letting it fall upon the pillow.

She had not closed the shutter. She hoped to accustom the mourner to the cheerfulness.

"I remember, now," she said, "how I helped on my anguish by refusing every blessing that was left to me on earth, when the one

good was removed. I will tell you, by and by, how consolation and peace came again to my soul."

Maud was interested only for the moment. One could not expect that anything would banish the consciousness of her affliction; but she allowed the light to stay upon the baby's curls, and herself opened the blinds the next day, and the next, until the little one was no longer there, but was resting in a lowlier bed. And when the child was gone, it seemed a comfort to see this same gleam of sunlight where the tiny head had lain. It was a link with the departed—a sort of golden chain, reaching from the chamber of the mother's sorrow up to the blissful abode of the child.

"You were right, sister Annie," said she, "to insist upon bringing me this solace," and she put her hand upon the radiant pillow; "I have felt nearer to my baby with this glory coming down from heaven. It is true that little children do not like the dark!"

"No wonder," said Annie, "their fresh,

pure souls have a certain affinity for the light, they leap to meet the early morning. I remember how my little Willie's eyes would open at the first faint streak of day, and how he would creep from his crib into my bed, and pull my sleepy lids apart, and laugh and crow, and point gleefully to the eastern sky."

"You are weeping, Annie. Then *you* are not yet resigned to *your* baby's death?"

"God's blessed will be done," replied her sister. "Tears are not always rebellion, dear Maud. I have never ceased to miss my darling from my arms and sight; but I am happy while I weep. When I recall his pretty ways, and how my days and nights were all inwoven with his most precious life, it is not strange that my heart overflows, and yet, I would not call my baby back from the bosom of Jesus, for all worlds. A little while and I shall go to him, shall find my ewe lamb in the green pastures, with the Great Good Shepherd, beside the still waters where no harm can ever come; no wolf of sin to tear and rend the flock,

and make the sheep to err and stray, and possibly lose their way beyond recall.

“ I am so glad for little Willie up in Paradise ; so proud of my bright angel boy ! All my sorrow is for my lonely self.

“ ‘ God has honored my child by the speed of His choice ;
He has crowned him with glory, o’erwhelmed him with
mirth,
He sings, up in heaven, with his sweet sounding voice.
While I, a saint’s mother, am weeping on earth.’ ”

“ It does not seem to me that I shall ever feel as you do, Annie. I grudge my baby even to God, and Heaven. I want her my own self. She need not have died. God is Almighty, He could have spared her to me. Oh ! my little one ; my darling ; my darling ! ”

Annie waited till this burst of anguish had spent itself. Then she said gently, “ It is better as our Father has ordered. We shall see by and by, how infinitely better than anything that we could have chosen.

“ When we remember that this world is but a school to fit us for the eternal land, is it not joy that our children have escaped a

wearisome probation, and through God's loving mercy and grace, have been received into the higher place without hard study and trial. Besides, Maud, the little children have no fear of death :

“ ‘ They lie down without the least alarm,
And sleep in Death's maternal arm,
Their little life away.’ ”

“ That is true ! I never thought of it before,” said Maud. “ My last hour is what I have always dreaded, and baby had not this terror.”

“ No,” said Annie, “ she had never committed wilful sin to plant death's sting. The messenger comes to the little children as an angel of light, and his face is full of smiles for them. It is better, if the will of God be so, to go Home before we need have any apprehension of our Heavenly Father's frown.”

“ I have been wondering whether I shall have my *little baby* in the other life, Annie, or whether she will have grown, so that nothing familiar will be left to tell me that she is mine. You know Emma's little

Harry who was sent away to nurse, because the mother had no strength to care for her child ! Only two years after, when she went across the water to her fatherland, to meet the little fellow, she would not have recognized him, he had so developed and changed."

"And yet, Maud, you recollect that her heart was instinctively touched at sight of the child, as she met it in the street with a strange nurse, and that she stopped to kiss it, and to take it in her arms, even before she knew really that it was her son.

"But whatever hindrances there may be in this world to our immediate and perfect recognition of each other after a period of separation, we are sure that in the world to come, where all our faculties and perceptions are quickened, we shall be instantly and forever conscious of all the treasures which God has bestowed upon us on earth,—the gift of love, which sprang out of his own immortal love.

"That we shall know each other face to

face, I am convinced, and that we shall see our beautiful babes, as infants still to our maternal hearts, I fully believe. My little Willie can be none other than my little Willie to me, though ages were to pass away before we meet.

“Are not grown men and women, as little boys and girls to their parents, even here? Their mothers and fathers seem to keep the same relative distance, and to feel the same protecting love. You may comfort yourself, dear Maud, with the assurance that,

“‘A babe in Heaven is a babe forever,
Perfect as spirits and able to pour forth
Their glad heart in the tongues which angels use.
These nurslings, gathered in God’s nursery,
Forever grow in loveliness and love,
(Growth is the law of all intelligence,)
Yet cannot pass the limit which defines their
being,’—

“‘In God’s great household, Heaven with all its joys
Will perfect, but not change their infancy,’

“This passage from Bickersteth, is so beautiful; and there is another that especially touches me, and answers to my own

heart's thought of the little ones in Paradise. He represents the meeting with his children,

“ ‘Voices as familiar as my mother tongue
Fell on me, and an infant cherub, sprang
As springs a ‘sunbeam to the heart of flowers,’
Into my arms, and murmured audibly,
‘Father, dear Father!’ and another clasped
My knees, and faltered the same name of power.
One look sufficed to tell me they were mine,
My babes, my blossoms, my long parted ones;
The same in feature, and in form, as when
I bent above their dying pillow last,
Only the spirit, now disrobed of flesh,
And beaming with the likeness of their Lord.’ ”

“ This is a very sweet thought, dear Annie, for you and me, whose babes were so perfectly formed; but poor ‘wee Wallace’ with his distorted spine, and the old face on his young shoulders, how would his mother like to think of him ‘as when she bent above his dying pillow last.’ ”

“ You forget, Maud, that so far as our mortal imperfections are concerned, we shall be purged and changed through the grave, and raised in unimpaired beauty. The spiritual body must be free from all defects, or

it would not be 'like unto the glorious body of our Lord Jesus.' But that we shall retain our individuality so as to be recognized by each other, is plain through Scriptural proof. Did not the Apostles know Moses and Elias on the Mount of Transfiguration, and did not Mary cry out, after the first surprise of the risen Saviour's presence was over, 'Rabboni!'

"Oh, it is precious to feel that we go to no uncertain destiny. The Home where our babes are sporting in the light of God, is as surely the scene of sweet family re-unions as the earthly home roof, that, in festive seasons, gathers beloved ones long parted."

"You speak as one who knows," said Maud. "To most people, the things of Paradise and of Heaven, seem intangible and dim."

"That is because they live more for this world than the world to come. We lose sight of the upper glory by looking constantly downwards. Like Faber's 'Old Laborer,'

“We see no bright blue sky,
Except what meets our eye
Reflected from the rain-pools in the street.”

“But unlike him, we do not turn even these faint glimpses to account, by dwelling upon the thought of what blessedness must be in the reality that can cast such beautiful shadow. I believe, sister, that one who lives much in communion with his Maker, is permitted an almost visible acquaintance with the eternal joys.”

“There are few who attain to such a privilege, Annie.”

“And yet, I recall some saintly men and women, whose hearts are wholly set upon sacred delights, and to whom the transition from this to the better life, would be as natural and sweet, as for us to loose our arms from our dear mother’s neck, that we might embrace our father.”

“I can scarcely understand this. I am afraid I have been too much absorbed in this world. My aspirations for my baby, were that she might grow up beautiful and

graceful, and accomplished, so as to make the joy and admiration of all who should meet her. I had not thought so much of the graces of soul, and of her advancement and preparation for Heaven."

"If this be so, my sister, our loving Saviour has seen it, and has provided that your little one's feet shall never go astray. We cannot always discern His motives in taking our dear ones from us, but we may be sure that it is never without mercy and love, both to them and to us."

Maud bowed her head and wept quietly. The slowly-creeping days were sadder than the first hours of her sorrow.

"Old grief is worse than new ; its pain
Is deeper in the heart ;
The dull blind ache is worse to bear
Than blow, or wound, or smart,"

And Annie felt keenly for the mourner, but whenever these paroxysms came upon her sister she made no attempt at consolation. She well knew that :

“Deep grief is better let alone,
Voices, to it, are swords,
A silent look will soothe it more
Than the tenderness of words.”

Yet, as the twilight gathered and the bereaved mother sat still in the gloom of her tears, Annie played a soft prelude upon her parlor organ, and sang:

“Far, far away, like bells at evening pealing,
The voice of Jesus sounds o’er land and sea,
And laden souls, by thousands, meekly stealing,
Kind Shepherd, turn their weary steps to Thee.

“Rest comes at length, though life be long and dreary,
The day must dawn, and darksome night be past,
All journeys end in welcomes to the weary,
And Heaven, the heart’s true home, will come at last.”

“How sweet that is!” said Maud—“I meant for baby to begin music as soon as her little fingers were strong enough to manage the keys.”

“And now, she is already taught,” responded Annie, observing the regret in her sister’s tone.

“The Seraphim’s song, is the song that she sings.”

“ Little harper, harping with her harp, and with her guileless mouth giving praise unto God, and to the Lamb. Oh, how do we forget what advantages of knowledge our little children have in that beautiful world above! For teachers—the bright angels, who know the heavenly wisdom. I am content for my little Willie, though, when God called, I would have held him back.

“ Earth’s masters coerce our little tender children; they frighten them into learning by punishment for a trifling delinquency. The angels have patience, and teach through love alone, and the blessed Saviour himself deigns to enlighten our ransomed babes. I should have dreaded giving up my boy to any mortal governor. Even our own rule over our children is often without due sympathy, and correct judgment.

“ Now there is no danger that they will be provoked unto wrath, or that they will be wounded by erroneous suspicions, or false accusations, or unmerited penalties.

“ Oh, Maud! it breaks my heart to see the

abuse of little innocents, by teachers, and masters, and parents, in this world ! And who knows what might not have been your weakness, and mine, in training these immortal spirits ! ”

“ You would make one afraid to be a mother.”

“ Oh, no, not when it pleases God to intrust to us a child. That which he takes we should not dare ask to keep ; but that which he spares to us, he will give us the grace, if we ask, to train for his Kingdom.”

“ You show a singular resignation, Annie, when you talk ; but did I not see you yesterday, weeping over Willie’s picture-book, and the little shoe, as you came suddenly upon them in the drawer ? ”

“ Tears are so precious, Maud, our dear Lord does not forbid them ; but rather mingles with them his own. I did weep over the thumbed book, where the lamb was represented in the Saviour’s arms. Willie used to lay his face to the Shepherd’s

face, and kiss it, and listen over and over again, to the story of His goodness to the little lambs. And you know how the red shoes pleased my darling boy, and how he clung to this one, after the other was lost, and would have it upon his foot just before he died. It is not to nurse a grief, dear Maud, that I keep some of the baby's things, to look at now and then; but as sweet remembrances of pleasant ways that a mother's heart loves to dwell upon; his golden curl that lay upon my bosom, or was lightly moved by the summer's breath; his little cap, with the ribbons tumbled, and the lace worn and slightly soiled by the warm head; his baptismal dress that hung over the Font, and caught some of the consecrated drops; his rubber ring indented by the little teeth—these are very precious to me, and keep my heart soft and warm towards all God's little children."

"Did you preserve everything that was Willie's?"

"Not for myself, Maud; that would have

been wronging the spirit of my darling. You know the winter was very cold, and there were needy objects all about me. I gave his warm flannels to comfort some poor frozen child. I cannot bear to see a baby chilled, and wretched for lack of clothing. It would have hurt me to put away Willie's wardrobe, when it would give cheer to some miserable nursling. I saved a few articles that my heart could not possibly spare; but poor 'Ettie's' baby boy had the rest. It gave me a pang at first to see them on another's child, but the blessing and the joy came with the thanks of the mother, and the comfort of the baby, which were to me as the approving smile of God."

"Annie, I cannot give away my little one's clothes."

"Not yet, sister. It could scarcely be expected so soon. It seems almost a sacrilege when one is newly bereaved, to part with any sacred memento of the absent. It is only when one's heart goes away from the grave, and dwells with the beloved, close to

our Lord Jesus, that one is able to overcome all thought of self."

Maud sighed heavily. She envied her sister the spirit to which she had attained. "It seems to me," she said, "that I shall never come to feel quite as you do, Annie. I wonder at your uniform cheerfulness. The world appears to me such a dark, dreary place since baby is gone, and yet I see you interested in every body with whom you come in contact."

"If I yield a pleasant service to our Heavenly Father, dear Maud, it is because of His holy discipline. 'Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Thy word.' It is true that God has taken my darling from my sight, but I know that it was in order to draw me nearer to Himself, and I am trying to give Him such loving obedience as I should have craved of my child if he had been spared to me here upon the earth. I think, too, that if we truly love God, we cannot be long cast down under any trial that He may see fit to send upon us; and besides, we know

that it is a sacred duty to enter into the joys and sorrows of others, while we are in the world, and that it is a sin to give ourselves up wholly to our own individual interests. There were months, after Willie went away, when my soul was sorrowful, even unto death, but our blessed Jesus was with me in this agony, and the angel of His Presence strengthened me, and lifted me up, and gave me work to do for others, so that the keenness of my grief might pass from me. Maud, it is when I have been most cheerful, and most earnest in my life work, that my sainted boy has seemed very close beside me, so that I could almost feel his precious touch. Oh! he is not lost to me! he has but gone just within the veil that separates the material from the spiritual world. Who knows but that God permits our darlings to minister to us in many a way that is mysterious to our comprehension! Often and often I feel the influence as of my baby's blessed nearness, and I seem to hear his little voice calling from above 'Mother, Mother.' Then I know

that I must not sit down and dream sadly, because I do not see him face to face, but that God means for me to arise and do some comforting thing among His sick and sorrowing and poor—something that will give joy to the angels in Heaven, and to my redeemed one in Paradise, and that will bring peace to my own soul.”

Maud got up hastily and went out from the house, and down the garden path, through the gate, and across the meadow, to a small evergreen enclosure not far away.

“She goeth unto the grave to weep there,” said Annie. “It will do her good, the grass is springing so freshly over the little mound, and the daisies are white and thick, (how my baby used to love to clasp them in his tiny hands!) and the birds are singing sweetly in the sunlit cedar boughs, and the blue sky bends over the spot, and God’s angels are watching beside the sacred dust, and our dear Lord Jesus himself has gone out after the mourner, and will, in His own good

time, say to the sleeping child 'come forth,'
and *will restore it to its mother.*"



SLEEP, BABY, SLEEP.

"Sleep, little baby! sleep!
Not in thy cradle bed,
Not on thy mother's breast
Henceforth shall be thy rest,
But with the quiet dead.

God took thee in his mercy,
A lamb untasked—untried—
He fought the field for thee—
He won the victory—
And thou are sanctified.

I look around, and see
The evil ways of men,
And oh, beloved child!
I'm more than reconciled
To thy departure then.

Now like a dew-drop shrined
Within a crystal stone,
Thou'rt safe in Heaven, my dove!
Safe with the source of love,
The everlasting One!

And when the hour arrives,
From flesh that sets me free,
Thy spirit may await,
The first at Heaven's gate
To meet and welcome me."



CHAPTER II.

“Why make ye this ado and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.”

OUR Blessed Lord Jesus does not mean to rebuke our natural, heartfelt expressions of grief. In these He himself participates. He only chides overmuch lamentation. The tears are not forbidden that make a rainbow of hope as we look through them up to His glory.

We cannot help weeping when a young girl goes out from us in the very brightness of her days. It leaves us so desolate to have these fresh buoyant, merry beings taken. They make such sunshine in the house. A daughter, a sister, — precious titles; and comprehending so much!

“Ours was the dearest and most lovely

that could have been sent upon the earth." Each bereaved heart says this, and each heart says truly, as it estimates its own treasure.

We have watched our darling from her infancy, and have noted every pretty development, and now just as she had flushed into womanhood, and was fulfilling to us sweetest promise, she is gone from our sight. O God! it is very hard to bear. And yet we thank Thee that she has been trained for the house above, so that it can be to her none other than a familiar place, just over the threshold of this outer court; a place of which she has had frequent glimpses before her feet crossed into the full Presence and perfect delight.

How well she always learned her holy lessons, and practiced the gentle manners that belong to the King's household!

I can see her little white figure beside my knee, and her clasped hands, and her innocent eyes raised toward Heaven, as if the face of the Divine Parent were plainly before her vision.

"Thou God seest me," seemed her happy thought all the day long. Not as of a watchful eye that waits to detect a fault; but as a loving guardianship, without which one would be very lonely on a strange pilgrimage. Our daughter rejoiced in this supreme vigilance. She would sing with all her heart, "I will walk in the light, in the light of God."

As she grew in stature she grew also in grace, and in favor with her Heavenly Father, and with all who knew her. Her chief joy was in imparting happiness to others. There was nothing selfish in her character. She was implicit in her obedience to her superiors, and very sweet and winning toward all.

"Was she faultless?"

Oh, no! only our Blessed Redeemer was without sin. God does not expect us to attain to perfection in this life, though he commands us to imitate the example of His perfect Son.

Our daughter, like all the children of Adam, was sometimes overcome by the

enemy; but her sorrow was so sincere, and her return to her holy allegiance so quick, that forgiveness was sure, and her peace scarcely broken, so few willful sins were committed by her.

Dear child! no wonder that she came to the hour of her departure from us with serenity!

“Father,” she said, “if this is death, it is very pleasant,” and so she passed away.

The remark indicated that she had felt a natural dread of the last moment.

All through her sickness, she had spoken of her unworthiness of the love of Christ, and yet had dwelt upon His free grace; how it was exhibited during His life here on earth, and how it follows us always, and everywhere, and is especially precious as we lie down never to rise again, and are reviewing our poor service to our Creator.

The utterances of our dying ones are ever to be treasured. They impress us as no sermons can do. We forget not one word that comes from the pale lips so soon to be

speechless. We keep their sayings in our hearts, and revolve them as we sit alone thinking of the absent.

But there are other words that dwell with us also. Words of bright cheer, spoken in health, when we little dreamed of the "weary waiting here," while our beloved are in Paradise.

A young girl is so full of hope, the hope of this life; she looks forward to a protracted future on earth. She seldom thinks of the grave, but as a distant refuge, when long storms shall have tired her, and made her yearn for rest. We also anticipate for her a lengthened probation, and much joy. We think too of ourselves. We look for sweet companionship when our daughter will be more like a dear sister to us, than a child. Already has she attained such maturity that she is able to enter into all our plans and interests, with hearty sympathy and appreciation. We have come to reverse the relationships of life, and to lean upon this young vigorous being, while our own spirits are losing some-

thing of their strength and elasticity. Oh! how precious our daughter's solicitude, and gentle care! how grateful her tender thought for father and mother, lest some heaviness of soul, or weariness of body hurt them.

Blithesome child, with this beautiful shade of care for us upon her sunny brow! How little did we imagine that we should be here to-day, and she beyond the reach of eye or hand. Oh! for one glimpse of the dear face! Oh! to clasp her once more to our heart of hearts! Oh! to touch her ransomed head again! Oh! to hear the pathetic voice, "Mother," "Father."

Patience my soul! In God's good time, it shall be.

We used to talk with our daughter of the time when she should be a bride, and should cross the ocean, and behold the beauty of far-off lands; and while we talked, lo! the Bridegroom came, and she has gone with Him to the other shore, and the knowledge of the far country is hers.

Does not her voice come to us from the beautiful city that is above all earthly descriptions? Does she not speak to us of the pure gold, and the jasper walls, and the precious stones, and the pearls and the crystal river, and the tree of life, and the glory that is better than sun, moon or stars; and the white throne, and the rainbow, and the blessed angels, and the saints of all ages, and the Lamb of God who has exalted her to the bliss of His eternal presence?

Oh! we cannot weep or make much ado, when we remember what gain there is to our darling, beyond the river of death.

We will make ready to go to her, since she will no more come to us. We will comfort one another with these words that have reached us from the New Jerusalem, where our daughter is in joy and peace.

If our child had lived in pleasure, and been wanton upon the earth; if she had not loved the way of holiness; if she had left us no assurance of her eternal happiness, it would be hard to dry our tears; but even

then, it would be wronging the Infinite mercy and compassion, if we did not cast all our care upon the Lord. To weep without hope, is what one who trusts in the Divine Saviour, can scarcely conceive of.

It is so blessed to remember that—

“There is no place where earth’s sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven ;
There is no place where earth’s failings
Have such kindly judgment given.”





CONSOLATION.

“ All are not taken ! there are left behind,
 Living Beloveds, tender looks to bring,
 And make the daylight still a happy thing,
 And tender voices to make soft the wind.
 But if it were not so—if I could find
 No love in all the world for comforting,
 Nor any path, but hollowly did ring,
 Where ‘ dust to dust ’ the love from life disjoined—
 And, if before those sepulchres un-moving,
 I stood alone (as some forsaken lamb
 Goes bleating up the moors in weary dearth),
 Crying ‘ Where are ye, O my loved and loving ? ’
 I know a voice would sound, ‘ Daughter, *I am*.
 Can I suffice for Heaven, and not for earth ? ’ ”





CHAPTER III.

“Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

“Thy brother shall rise again.”

WHAT bitterness of regret in the expression of the sister of Lazarus!

What blessedness of hope begotten by the promise of our Lord Jesus!

In the hour of deep distress, when we look in vain for the intervention of man to save us from an impending grief, and when prayers to the Almighty are unavailing, to avert the sorrow, we are apt to think ourselves God-forsaken.

“Now, Jesus *loved* Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.”

And yet He did not interpose to spare the dear ones the anguish of this separation from their brother, though they had appealed to

Him in the touching message, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest, is sick."

True, He did not go at once to Bethany, and restore the dying man, but He lingered in the vicinity and awaited the hour of deliverance, which should confirm His disciples in the Christian Faith, and would best promote the glory of God. This narration of Lazarus' sickness, and death, and resurrection, is very beautiful, and full of truest comfort to us, who are in affliction. Possibly, we have all, in the deep of our souls, spoken Martha's and Mary's reproach, to our very best Friend, "Lord, *if* Thou hadst been here?"

But now, we have come to know the human sympathy of Jesus. "He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled." "Jesus wept." "Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself, cometh to the grave."

Oh, there is precious consolation in the thought of the presence of the God Man beside that tomb at Bethany.

And as the Saviour of mankind was there,

weeping with the mourners, and groaning in spirit over the power of that death which sin has brought into this world, so is He with us, sharing all our griefs, and acquainted with all our sorrows, and waiting for the moment when He can say to our beloved, "Come forth," and to our hearts, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome death, and the power of the grave."

We ought to feel that he cannot be very far away from us in the time of our trial, that He abides near us to help and bless, and that he will surely come to the very place where our dead lie, and where we so often are weeping.

And then, the separation will not be long. But as "four days" when we shall look upon the re-animate face, and have the society of our brother again.

There is a sadness in the decease of a vigorous man, that scarcely attaches to either the very young, or the very old. The prime of life seems his. He appears fitted to cope with every enemy, and to overcome every

ill. We do not associate with him the idea of decay, or death. We look up to Him for strength, we lean upon him for support. "Our Brother." What confidence of protection in the words! To the sister there is that thought; to the brother the sense of companionship, or of example. To both, the consciousness of pride.

I have in my mind such a brother, stricken down in the vigor of his manhood, and removed from the earth.

We are too apt to lament him as one gathered before the time. As if the Divine Reaper knew not the hour of harvest! As if God were not so wise, that He would leave plucking, if the fruit would better ripen here, than in Eternity! As if our gracious Redeemer were not so merciful, that He would not take a man from possible repentance! We can surely trust God for this; that if our brother has gone in the midst of his age, it is because the Omniscient has seen that he has shown whatever strength he would have done, to this generation. What

new impetus the transition to the better world may give, we do not know. There are times in our life here below, when our whole being seems to stagnate. There is no quick pulsation; no healthy circulation; no vigor of brain, or nerve, or muscle. The evil comes from something in the air about us. We go to another clime, and breathe, and act again. The torpor is removed; we cannot come back. We have exhausted the old climate. Our life and influence are better worth in the new, and our friends must rejoice for us.

There are men taken out of the world, whose stay here seems to have wrought nothing; their noble, God-given faculties all lost, or wasted. Such, we must leave to the tenderness of Him, whose judgment is better than our mercy. "He knoweth our infirmities; He remembereth whereof we are made; He is pitiful and long-suffering." If we think of human failings with kindness and charity, how much more shall the Infinite pity be shown toward them?

It is not safe to be presumptuous toward God ; to continue in sin in that grace may abound ! Let no one take courage to do wrong, from a thought of the sweet mercy of Heaven. We, who yet have something of our probation left, must strive to enter in at the strait gate, as if there were no merit but of works, since it is by our works that God will judge us ; and yet, for those whose season of combat is over, we may think more of mercy, than of their delinquencies, or God's wrath, as we remember into whose hands they have fallen.

There is a passage in Bickersteth, that has given me great comfort, even with regard to those who must be cast out forever from the presence of the blessed. It is almost with trembling that I say this, lest it should by any be abused, and yet it is the thought of a man of God, and of a mind of deep reflection. It speaks of the submission of the condemned, to the Divine will that has fixed their eternal state ; a submission that seems somewhat to mitigate the misery,

Satan says:—

“The Lord is righteous ; I have sinned, and die,
Lost, lost, nor would I crave it otherwise,
What would I otherwise? escape from chains?
Goodness has hung these chains around my limbs,
O, God ! I bow forever at thy feet.
The only Potentate, the only Lord,
I see far off, the glory of thy Kingdom,
Basking in peace, uninterrupted peace :
But were I free, and were my comrades free,
Sin mightier than myself and them, would drag
Our armies to perplex those fields with war,
Only thus fetter’d can we safely gaze
On *that which is the only lenitive of pain,*
Virtue and goodness triumphing, and grace,
Evolving, out of darkness, light, in Heaven,
Thus only, to the prisoners of despair,
Can mercy, which is Infinite, vouchsafe
For glimpses of the beauty of holiness.
Albeit a beauty which can never clothe
Ourselves, the heirs of everlasting wrath.
Woe, woe immedicable woe for those
Whose hopeless ruin, is their only hope,
And hell their solitary resting-place,
Lost, lost, our doom is irreversible ;
Power, justice, *mercy, love* have sealed us here.
Glory to God who sitteth on the throne,
And to the Lamb forever and forever.”

But, to the word of inspiration we should go for all positive solace, or comfort, in our doubts, and our sorrows, with regard to

those who have left us no sure hope of their eternal happiness. The promise to the dying thief has calmed many a despairing mourner, when all words of man were in vain. The power of our Lord Jesus, and his willingness to save unto the uttermost, is our best reliance. We have no right even in our own minds, to *fix* the eternal state of the departed, and to lament even the most wretched sinner as already in endless woe. Let us leave such in the hands of our merciful and just Creator, and seek earnestly our own salvation, and that of the living around us. And let us remember that in removing the sinner from earth, God is restraining his hands from further mischief, that might swell the measure of his woe, and the keenness of our sorrow.

God doeth all things well. We can trust Him with those who offend His goodness, and with those who love His holy laws, and walk uprightly in them.

We know how He yearns toward the rebellious. Did He not die for us "while we were yet sinners?"

If our brother has spent his days here in the beauty of holiness; if he has given his fresh young being wholly to God, and lived only with a view to his eternal and glorious inheritance, thrice blessed are we, as we think into what bliss the angel of death has ushered him! There is nothing so precious to our bereaved hearts, as the memory of his devout and earnest soul; nothing so comforting as the recollection of his devotion to the cause of Christ Jesus our Lord; nothing so sweet as the abiding influence of his gentle and pure character, and his worthy example.

Happy even in their tears beside the new-made grave, are those who lay such a brother down to his last repose.

“Thy Brother shall rise again.”





BEREAVEMENT.

“When some beloveds, ’neath whose eyelids lay
The sweet lights of my childhood, one by one
Did leave me dark before the natural sun,
And I astonied, fell, and could not pray,
A thought within me to myself did say—
‘Is God less God, that *thou* art mortal-sad?
Rise, worship, bless Him ! in this sackcloth clad
As in that purple !’—But I answer nay !
What child his filial heart in words conveys,
If him for very good his father choose
To smite ? What can he but with sobbing breath
Embrace th’ unwilling hand which chasteneth ?
—And *my* dear Father, thinking fit to bruise,
Discerns in silent tears, both prayer and praise.”

5*





CHAPTER IV.

“So I spake unto the people in the morning, and
at even my wife died.”

SO sudden a bereavement! The morning fraught with its ordinary occupations and interests; the household full of its accustomed joy; the children merry; the wife glad with present delights, and happy anticipations; the husband content, and grateful for his home blessings. He thinks not of sorrow; he goes about speaking cheerfully with friends; in his heart he is planning future amusements and pleasures, with the one dear object for whom all his efforts are made, and in whom all his thoughts centre. At evening, “with a stroke, the desire of his eyes is taken away.” God comfort him!

Such an experience came to one of my nearest relatives. It was New-Year's day. A time when we feel that life has for us a fresh lease. Oh! the beauty, and the promise of that gala morning, eighteen years ago! Oh! the anguish of that night, as it shut down heavily upon the stricken husband!

There is no immediate consolation for such woe. "Life struck sharp on death makes awful lightning." It stuns to insensibility of all things but the great black void that is just before us.

We see not Jesus with His eye of pity, and His heart of love. Heaven, and the angels seem afar off, and the coffin, and the shroud, and the grave are close beside us.

Even after a man is awakened from the first dread shock, there is a long indifference to the business and duties of life.

The little motherless children at length arouse him from a morbid grief. For them "his grave lips contrive a miserable smile." For them he consents to take his place in the

world again. Through them Infinite love speaks to his bereaved soul, and he looks up with gratitude for the blessings left to him.

God gives us time to weep. He does not exact from us a tearless acquiescence in His fatherly corrections. We may bow down in extreme agony before Him and He will not chide. Three times we may pray for the bitter cup to pass from us, and God will listen patiently, and send His angel to strengthen us. Oh! the blessedness of the relief that comes at last!

“An angel from heaven.” The strength is from above. God sends it. Human sympathy also He gives us. “Peter and James, and John”—the friends who have been with us in close communion. They may not enter into the very depths of our sorrow; none but God can do this, but they are only “a stone’s cast” from us, and the gloom of our Gethsemane is not so deep, for their presence.

The bosom companion is gone. No one can supply that loss and lack.

Divine institution of marriage ! Mystical, sacred union, of which no symbol is worthy but the bridal of Christ and his Church.

If soul meet soul in a true wedlock, is the bond ever broken ? "The communion of saints" shall endure for ever.

The beloved one, departed from our physical sight, is yet near to our spiritual sense. We feel the familiar presence in all the places where we have been together. It follows us in our going out, and our coming in.

Shall we say that this invisible presence does not deepen the yearning for the dear form and face ! Oh, no. We stretch out heart and arms, and speak the beloved name, and long to touch, and clasp, and caress.

Yet is God very good, to leave us so much joy as this dim vision, this intangible nearness.

To be *satisfied*, is not what He asks of us. That will come when we awake up after Christ's likeness, and behold all the dear

ones whom he has given us, gathered with us in the One Eternal Home. "Theremin's" beautiful "Awakening" depicts the delight of a re-union between husband and wife, after a long separation by the death of one of the parties.

It is the moment when the other imprisoned spirit is freed. The wife speaks, "Thou hast slept well?"

"As never before. Not even in childhood did I experience such a deep, soft, refreshing slumber. My old father, thou rememberest him well, when he stepped into the room in the morning, where we were waiting for him, used to say in answer to our inquiry how he had slept, 'Like the blessed!' Like the blessed, I might say, have I slept; or rather like the blessed have I awakened. I feel myself new quickened; as if all weariness and all need of sleep were gone forever. Such vigor is in my limbs, such elasticity in my movements, that I believe I could fly if I would."

"And you are pleased with this place?"

“ Indeed, I must say we have been in many a beautiful place together ; but this is wonderful and beautiful beyond description.

“ What trees ! actually heaven high ! They bear blossoms and fruit together. Their branches swaying to the morning wind, cause the tree-tops to give forth melody as if a host of feathered singers dwelt in them. Behind the trees, the mountains tower up, their majestic forms rigidly defined in the pure air, and here and there, clouds glowing with all the hues of sunrise and sunset, stretch along their sides, or float over their summits. Upon the highest peak, out of a milk white translucent shimmering mist, there spring as it were, the gates and towers and palaces of a splendid city. From this peak nearest us, there seems to gush a mighty water, which I may call a sea, rather than a stream, and which nevertheless leaps down the numerous terraces of the mountain, not with fearful roaring, but with a melodious sound. Wide about us are sprinkled the drops which water the trees and flowers, and im-

part a delicious coolness to the air, making it ecstasy to breathe here. Look, too, at this bank whereon we stand ! how luxuriant, and how thickly strewn with wonderful flowers ! We wander over it, and yet the spires of grass are not broken, nor are the flowers crushed by our footsteps. It is a solitary place ; yet on all sides vistas open to us, and the horizon tempts us ever farther and farther on."

"Hast thou seen all this before, or dost thou see it to-day for the first time?"

"Notwithstanding all is so home-like to me here, and though everything greets me as something long beloved, yet when I think of it, I must say No, I have never been here before."

"And dost thou not wonder to see me again at thy side?"

"Indeed, and hast thou not, somehow, always been near me?"

"In a certain sense, I have ; but in another, not so. It is long since thine eyes have seen me. I disappeared from them once."

“ Ah ! now there sweeps over my memory as it is were a dark cloud—days of anxiety and nights spent in weeping—only the painful thoughts and emotions which so recently absorbed me. Now they elude my grasp ; I cannot distinctly comprehend them, they appear to me something mysterious.”

“ Think on the fourteenth of February.”

“ How, now it is all clear to me. It was near noon. Four days hadst thou been sick. We had feared much for thee, but still had hope. Suddenly a faintness came over thee ; thou didst lean thy head upon my breast ; didst sink back with a deep sigh ; thou diedst—Yes, it is all over, thou art dead.”

“ I am dead ; yet see, I live.”

“ If thou art dead, and if I see thee, then do I really dream ?”

“ Thou dreamest not, for thou art awake.”

“ Or, art thou sent down from heaven to earth, that I should see thee again for a short time, and then anew, through long years lament thy disappearance ?”

‘ No, henceforth we shall never separate.

I am indeed sent to thee, but not down upon the earth. Look around thee here; where upon earth, hast thou seen such trees, such waters? Look at thyself; thou didst go about yonder, bowed beneath the weight of years. Now thou art young again: thou dost not walk, thou floatest; thine eyes not only see, but see immeasurably far; look inward upon thyself; has it always been with thy heart as now?"

"Within me is a deep, unfathomable, ever-swelling, and yet entirely still and peaceful sea. Yes, when I look about me here, and when I feel thy hand in mine, then I must say I am blessed. I am in heaven."

"Thou art."

"And then must I be actually dead?"

"Thou art. Hast thou not lain sick in that very chamber where I died, and whither thou didst long to be brought. Has not thy son, day and night, without leaving thy side, sincerely and tenderly nursed thee? Hast thou not, by day and night, found open the blue eye of thy daughter, in which she

vainly strove to hold back the forth-welling tears? Was there not then a deep mist, and utter darkness spread over the faces of thy children, and over everything around thee?"

"I am dead? Lord of life and death, I thank Thee that Thou hast fulfilled this so great thing in me; that Thou hast led me to such high happiness; to such great honor; dead, and happy to be dead! Thou knowest, O Lord, how often that moment stood before me, how often I have prayed that Thou Thyself, since I was not able to do it, would prepare me for that hour; that Thou wouldst send me a soft, blessed death. Now, O Lord, that Thou hast heard this as all my other prayers, Thou hast in this as in all things eternally shown Thyself gracious and pitiful. What stood before me is now over.

"Truly, though dead, I have not yet learned exactly what death is; but this much I know, death is sweet. As one bears a sleeping child out of a dark chamber into a bright spring garden, so hast Thou borne me from

earth to heaven. But now, loved one, hold me no longer back."

"Whither wouldst thou go?"

"Canst thou ask? To whom else but to Him? All is beautiful and lovely here; these trees, these flowers, this down-streaming water, this coolness which breathes over flowers and trees, and deep into my heart; thyself, thy presence which after so long a separation; after so many tears, I enjoy again; but not even all this satisfies me, Himself I must see."

. . . "Thou wilt see Him, but not until He comes to thee. Until then be patient. I am sent to thee to tell thee that such is His will."

"Now know I for a certainty that I am in heaven, for my will yields itself implicitly to His without a struggle. — So readily could we not submit below. But if thou art sent to me from Him, then must He have spoken with thee. He has already spoken many words with thee?"

"Already many."

“O thou truly blessed one! I see with what glory and honor He has crowned thee. Between thine image in thy last sickness, and that which now stands revealed to me, between that perishable flower and the heavenly blossom, what a difference! No, this bloom upon thy cheek can never fade; this light in thine eyes can never be dimmed; thy form shall never bear the impress of age. Thus, ever wilt thou wander about with me here, thou wilt show me the glory of these heavenly mansions, and also wilt lead me to those other blessed ones who are dear to me.”

“Thou wilt see them as soon as thou hast seen the Lord.”

. . . “Hearest thou those sounds? What may it be? Strange and wonderful, like the mingled roaring of the sea, and sweetest flute notes, they come from that quarter, and float through the wide heaven. Hark! Now from the other side, melody arises, a wholly different note, and yet as strange and enrapturing. What may it be?”

“ They are angel choirs, which from immeasurable distance, answer one another.”

“ What do they sing?”

“ Ever of One who is the theme of eternal and endless praise.”

“ For sometime already, a form moves about there.”

“ Observe it more closely ; and then tell me why it attracts thee so.”

“ Pardon me who am so lately called from the earth, an earthly comparison. At the home where I was born—thou knowest it well, though at the time thou wast no longer upon the earth. I had planted a garden. As the Spring came, I devoted myself to its cultivation, and enjoyed myself over my plants, and their beautiful unfoldings. There were many trees there, much shrubbery, and many flowers ; yet I knew every shoot ; I had myself planted and watered it ; each in its turn came under my inspection, and when it put on its bright green, and blossomed beautifully, and grew thriftily, then found I a heart friend in it. This seems to

me to be that man, the gardener, in this heavenly garden. He moves hither and thither quietly, and in mildest radiance, but one can see that everything here is familiar to him. He casts around on all besides, a satisfied and friendly glance, and appears to find joy in all creation here. My heart! till this moment I have felt within me only soft, soothing emotions; but now a tempest is rising in my breast; I am dizzy: heaven with its glory vanishes from my sight; I see him alone. Now pain returns again to this heart; yet in this pain there lives a higher blessedness. My soul burns with longing to approach Him. Yes, He is indeed one known to me, though never before seen face to face. Now He turns hitherward and looks upon us; He appears to rejoice over us; His eyes glisten with tears of joy; I can no longer restrain myself; I must away to Him; I must say to Him that I love Him as I never loved aught before; He raises his hands—how? in those hands a mark, and from the mark, rays darting

forth? Yes, those are the pierced, the bleeding hands. He blesses us! Deep in my heart I feel His blessing. Now know I that I am in heaven? Now know I that this is He?"

. . . Oh triumphant hour that will outweigh all the light afflictions of earth! "Forever together with the Lord!" Husband and wife, wife and husband! All tears wiped away; all sorrow banished,—one sweet eternal home; one song of praise; one rapture; a life that is all bliss, all peace, all love!





TEARS.

“ *Thank God, bless God, all ye who suffer not
More grief than ye can weep for. That is well—
That is light grieving ! lighter, none befell
Since Adam forfeited the primal lot.
Tears ! what are tears ? The babe weeps in its cot,
The mother singing ; at her marriage bell,
The bride weeps ; and before the oracle
Of high-faned hills, the poet hath forgot
That moisture on his cheeks. Thank God for grace,
Whoever weep ; albeit, as some have done,
Ye grope tear-blinded, in a desert place,
And touch but tombs,—look up ! Those tears will run
Soon, in long rivers, down the lifted face,
And leave the vision clear, for stars and sun.* ”





CHAPTER V.

“The old man of whom ye spake, is he yet alive?”

“He is yet alive.”

DID I not see him die? It was on the Jewish Sabbath, our preparation day for the Resurrection feast. The shadows of evening were drawing nigh. A fitting time for our good old father to fold his hands, and give up his spirit unto God.

We had gathered round the bed to watch his panting breath, for he was in haste to be gone. We could catch the earnest words, “I want—I want—to depart—and to be—with Christ.”

Not that he was impatient of life, oh no; that, despite many cares and trials, had been so blessed that he had said, one day, “I

should be willing to live my life over again, so much of joy has it brought to me."

It was the death struggle that had wearied him, and the prospect of eternal bliss with Him whom he had always served, that made him so ready to go.

While we were weeping and praying, Nature yielded, and our beloved father gave up the ghost.

Can I forget the moment when he could no more answer our love by word, or sign, or any motion. Silent he lay, with breathless lips, and closed eyes and still pulse. The heart no longer beat; the blood was congealed in the veins, the limbs grew rigid, and would not obey the will. Was not this death?

We could take him up and carry him whither we would, and he had not the power to resist. We clothed him in white robes, and he seemed sleeping very sweetly upon his pillow. Our mother sat near him, throughout the Lord's day, reading the words of a precious book. Her face was

serene, and her manner calm, and assured ; as if she had a beautiful revelation concerning her beloved one.

The marks in her Bible proved to us afterward that she had.

“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a *living soul*.”

“The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.”

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.”

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”

“I am the Resurrection, and the Life, saith

the Lord ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die."

"Christ has risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead ; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead be in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

"This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

"He is not dead, but sleepeth."

Oh ! it was not strange that our mother's face was as one transfigured, while she read these inspirations from above,—even though she sat in the presence of her dearest and best, and met no answering glance as she gazed tenderly upon him.

“The house was radiant with celestial light. Is Asrael’s wing so beautiful whenever he comes to bear the Christian soul to God; or were there angels of life thronging our dwelling, and filling it with heavenly glory?”

We had thought of death as a gloomy and forbidding phantom, that would bring only terror. It was a marvelous thing, that he should come to us in this cheerful guise instead of overwhelming us with fright.

We thanked God for His goodness and tenderness toward us, in treating us as the little sensitive children who are afraid of the dark.

If for a moment, when we touched our father’s brow, the cold made us shudder, the Everlasting Arm stole around us, and a gentle voice whispered, “Let not your heart be troubled; I will not leave you orphans; I will comfort you. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

There were seasons when we thought of

the broken household chain; the chief link removed, so that the strength seemed greatly impaired, and then our tears flowed very freely; but one of God's messengers came and spoke to us with consoling sweetness, "The Christian home has its roof partly in heaven." There is blessed communion and fellowship with every member departed, the visible chain does indeed seem to be broken, but it is not so. Can you not feel the tension, as your father draws you toward the Eternal City? Lift up your hearts. It is through these, and not through the natural eye, that you will still behold the face of your beloved, even after the grave shall seem to hide it from your view; it is through heart and soul that you shall be cheered, and blessed with a nearer, and more sacred converse than any mortal words can give.

Our father's life had been one of earnest labor in the vineyard of the Lord. He was yet vigorous for the work when a sad casualty suddenly struck the implements from his hand.

We were regretting that his profitable toil for the Master had ceased. It is such honor and comfort, to be active for God.

Had we forgotten that the *Rest*, of Paradise, is but the renewal of strength; that we "shall mount up with wings as eagles; that we shall run and not be weary, and walk and not faint?"

Did we not remember how our great Exemplar, between His death and His Resurrection, "went and preached to the spirits in prison," and that He would surely find some happy employment for those who love his service!

Rest, to an immortal soul, is not torpor; activity, to the undying spirit, is not weariness. Our father would be busy still. While the body was undergoing the necessary change, which was to fit it for the re-occupancy of the soul, that soul would pursue such ministry as God appoints for His ransomed ones. There was pleasure in this reflection.

We came to wonder, after a little while,

as one question of a friend in a distant country, "What is father doing to-day?"

That was after we had laid his body in the ground; in the *cemetery* (*the sleeping place*;) in "*God's Acre*," where the Resurrection seed is sown; in "*the chambers of repose*," as the early Christians called the resting-places of their dead, in the "*field of peace*," as the sweet Moravian thought styles the burial ground.

What a consecrated spot is that where our father's lonely bed is made! Many a time have I seen him measure with his foot the little space of earth where he must one day lie. It seemed a satisfaction to him to know that the place was chosen, and no dread to contemplate it. The great forest trees encircled it. Close by slept one as dear as life. Sweet flowers bloomed near. The sinless creatures of God, the birds and the squirrels, haunted it, and verdant shrubs grew here and there.

As we wound through the green with our precious burden, our mournful proces-

sion became almost a triumphal cortege. The sun burst from the threatening clouds, and fell in glory upon our father's coffin. Why should we weep and lament; had he not gone to be with the Great King? would he not by and by receive at His hand the beautiful crown that had long been promised?

Our grief at the separation was chastened by this knowledge, and our sorrow was soothed by the blessed hope that always sustains the children of the righteous.

Prayers for the living were said, and thanks given for all who had finished their course in faith, and had left us the example of a godly life.

An anthem of praise was sung by sweetest voices. The hour and the scene are vividly before me at this moment; the open grave with the coffin of our beloved one down in the bosom of the earth; our widowed mother bowed beside it; we children close around; the clergy and friends gathered about us, with their hearts of sympathy manifest in

their faces; the morning-glories twined around our little brother's tombstone, and swaying in the soft breeze; the blue sky, and the sunlight freshly revealed from the dark clouds; the green leaves rustling above our heads. I do not forget one feature of the hour.

Often, since that day, we have been to sit by our father's Greenwood bed, and have spoken cheerfully to each other of his happiness in the home beyond the skies.

We never think of him as lying there; we know that his spirit is active and enjoying. The dust is very precious still, and God will keep loving watch over it, until the day of the coming of the Son of Man to restore it to the light.

Sometimes we grow impatient of the long absence of our beloved one, and say, "Oh that father were with us to-day! Remember how he used to enjoy the pleasant family circle?"

Then we recall the many years of his society vouchsafed us; the blessed example

that he set ; the wise guidance that he gave ; the gentleness that he manifested towards our faults, which he kindly, but firmly corrected ; his sweet patience with our infirmities, and his faithful endeavor to help us on toward the eternal light and peace.

When we think how long God spared him to us, we feel that we have no right to murmur because we could not keep him with us for a few years more. We know that the Father of spirits has a right to take His children home when He wills their return from earth.

“ When a loving mother sendeth forth her child to nurse, and the nurse hath kept it long enough, if the mother take her own child home again, hath the nurse any cause to grudge, or complain ? How much less cause have we to show any token of unwillingness that God should take home a departing soul ; the work of His own hands ; the plant of His own grafting ; who first gave it, and will before all others, most lovingly keep and tend it. There is none knows

the love of a mother, but a mother ; there is none knows the love of God, but God, who is love."

We are glad to trust that love, for ourselves, and for all who are dear to us.

" We are God's care as well when He suffers us to be troubled, as when He smiles upon us, and surely he is a very undutiful child who will love and obey his father just as long as he pleaseth him, and no longer."

Our dear father used to quote so much for us from godly authors concerning the better land ! He often said,

" What we call death, is but a precious exchange of earth for Paradise. We leave the society of man, and go to that celestial company of angels above, where also a multitude of our good friends expect us. Our separation each from other here, is only for a time. Our continuance together in the life to come, shall be forever."

Only a few days before his departure, we heard him repeating these quaint words :

" We owe God a death. All our life have

we been gathering manna to comfort us in our last agony. What hurt is it going to Paradise? After a while we shall have greater joys than now we feel pain. We shall go to one of those mansions which Christ has gone to prepare for us. Our Head is in heaven already to assure us, that before it be long we shall follow after. We cannot have our happiness unless we go unto it. Christ went not up to glory, but first he suffered. Our way to life, is to die with Christ. Let not pains dismay us, for we are passing from death to life ; from sorrow to joy ; from a vale of misery to a Paradise of all comfort and consolation. Let not our sins dismay us ! Christ hath died for them ; who is our advocate with the Father."

The ancient language become well the venerable lips. We used to listen with reverent attention, as we felt how near to the blissful world our dear old father was. What a crown of glory was his hoary head ! How the light from the Holy Ghost shone out from the temple of his body, through the

windows, as he gazed upon us! Ah! there is a great mystery in the union of the spiritual with the corporeal! It impresses us strangely when the breath of a good man is struggling for release. We are awe-stricken when the soul has gone out from its earthly tenement whither we cannot follow it until God shall call. It is a merciful voice that speaks to us at such a moment.

“Our friend Lazarus sleepeth.” “He is *not dead.*”



AN ENDED EARTHLY LIFE.

"So the pilgrim's staff is broken,
And the sandals are laid aside."
"I am come to the gate," said our father;
"Will they hear on the other side?"

"I have only a little token,
'Twas given me long ago;
But it came from the dear Redeemer,
Who liveth and loveth—I know!"

Softly he whispered the watch-word,
As he knocked at the gate of the King,
And I think that the shining angels
Must have hastened to let him in.

For just as the terrible shadow
Was veiling the dear old face,
There fell o'er its marble features,
A glory of perfect peace.

It smoothed away from the forehead
The folds, and the lines of care,
And touched, with its brightening halo
The tresses of silvered hair.

For a moment the voice of one weeping
Was hushed at the glorious sight,
For the fearful shadow had passed away,
And the evening time was light."



CHAPTER VI.

*“My Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel
and the horsemen thereof.”*

IT is with an exceeding bitter yearning, that I look into the heavens, and cry after him who has crossed the Jordan and gone up to God.

Even in view of so glorious a translation as that from earth to Paradise, I find myself almost willing to recall the “Angel” whom God sent to deliver unto me the words of eternal life, and to lead me up the steep of this rough world, to the Holy City above.

How, otherwise, can I pursue my pilgrimage that was, with such a guide, comparatively easy!

“A pastor is the deputy of Christ, for the reducing of man to the obedience of God.”

If our blessed Lord Jesus had not seen our great need, He would not have left His vicegerents upon the earth, when He himself was received up into Heaven. There must be some to sit daily teaching in the temple, and calling our minds away from worldly things, or we shall forget our high destiny, and be content to grovel here below.

The good pastor is in God's stead to his people, holding out his threatenings to warn, and His promises to allure. If he is of the spirit of his dear Lord, "he is not only a father to his flock, but also possesseth himself thoroughly of the opinion, carrying it about with him as fully as if he had begot his whole parish."

"My little children" is the constant thought of his heart, and the frequent expression from his lips.

His eye is over them, as the eye of a mother watches her little family, to see what of good or of ill may befall. It is his province to detect the evil, and try to remedy it, and to foster every worthy disposition.

He is to give account for the souls entrusted to him, therefore he is always on the alert, to catch them away from Satan, and his defilements, and to present them pure and chaste, unto God.

The good pastor is an example to his flock. He walks in meekness and lowliness, following the footsteps of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. He is gentle toward the wayward, and wandering, going out after them when they are far astray, and bringing them, with rejoicing, back again to the fold.

He “is not an hireling, but he careth for the sheep, and never fleeth when he seeth the wolf coming.”

Such was the beloved Shepherd whom it pleased God to remove from us—the time since seems too long to compute.

“When one has heard a voice that is as the voice of the Good Shepherd, and has learned to know, and love, and obey it;” when one has been led as by a hand divine, into holiest paths of peace, and suddenly the voice is silent, and the hand falls from one’s

grasp, who shall describe the groping and the anguish as one listens in vain for the familiar tone, and blindly beats the air to try and find the old support.

If rightly appreciated, and rightly exercised, there is no relationship upon earth more close, and blessed, than that between a pastor and his flock. Justified by Scriptural warrant, a learned bishop has compared it to the marriage bond :

“ So near, so delicate, so sacred.”

Another says, “ The word of God countenances a most affectionate intercourse between pastor and people. He is the common friend and comforter ; he is called to witness the joys and sorrows of the family, and the individual. It is his voice that consecrates in the first days of life, its whole future course to the gracious Saviour, and his that utters over the closing grave the accents of triumphant faith. How can he have a heart, and not feel everything, else to be as nothing in comparison with the eternal peace of those to whom he is thus allied.”

He need not fear to indulge too warmly the true love of their souls ; it will never interfere with his allegiance to his Master. It is the very spirit of that Master.

The Son of God came upon earth, and lived and died, simply because He loved our guilty and wretched race ; and it is simply because he loves them, that He guards His church, and makes it victorious. He follows Christ, in whose heart burns the same wish to save.

If a Christian pastor be faithful, he must love every one of his people, and be ready to make many and great sacrifices to that love. If he be faithful, he must be earnest in his supplications that they may all come to the knowledge of the truth, and be stablished, strengthened, settled therein. If he be faithful he must strive so to model his instructions, his exhortations, his warnings, and his consolations, that the needs of all may be supplied, and the word of truth rightly divided, and said, neither so harshly as to loose the stamp of affection, nor so gently as

to glide away without leaving its mark upon the conscience. This is our conduct in other matters, towards those whom we love, those in whose prosperity lie our hope and joy ; and it is here as everywhere, the cause of real and discreet kindness.

To such desires and endeavors of the pastor, ought the desires and endeavors of the people to respond.

If they have confidence in him, let them remember that they are the subject of his most frequent and fervent prayers ; and let their corresponding supplications call down upon him and upon his labors, the continual dew of the Divine blessing. Let them believe that in no way can they afford him so much happiness as when they cordially accept the message which he brings, and, in their daily walk, give glory to Him whom he serves !

“ Oh ! the beauty and blessedness of such a bond !

I cannot recall without deepest emotion, the simple paternal, Christ-like character of him who has gone.

With the thought of the quiet form resting on the bosom of the earth, there come memories of active Christian duties, that have well earned repose.

O ! folded hands, so oft upraised to bless !
O ! silent lips, once breathing out inspired words of hope and love, and God's forgiving grace ! O ! gentle, tender heart, that beat so warmly in response to others' joys or woes !

When one has faithfully done his work here below, and our dear Lord, seeing, calls to his reward, "Come thou up higher," ought we to be so mournful in our selfish regrets ?

If he whom my soul laments, had been necessary to its advancement toward heaven, would he not have been longer spared to guide and bless ?

It is only when I sit down calmly and earnestly to reflect upon the Providence that shapes our lives, that I look with a sort of resignation upon the removal of this dear friend.

To sorrow with a rebellious spirit is to

doubt the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, that always does for us better than we can either ask or think. And yet there are moments that seem very like rebellion to the will of God, when one says, "I shall never recover from this grief," "If I could, by speaking the wish, I would have things as they once were."

Let me dwell with gratitude upon the past, and look with bright anticipation toward the future.

I see, in the long ago, one to whom I had access as to the Friend above. In every doubt that beset my soul; in every scruple of conscience, which my ignorance could not settle; in deep grief that needed comfort; in exuberant joy, that should be subdued; in the time of sickness, when God makes it a duty for us to call for the elders of the Church to pray over us—in every event of life, it was my great privilege to go to Him who was set over me in the Lord, and to ask his holy offices of counsel and support.

And this confidence was always met with the truest sympathy and help. Like the great High Priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and who never turned away from any earnest cry, so this follower of Jesus imitated his Gracious Lord in the benevolence of his spirit and acts.

When any toilsome task was to be performed, and we gathered to the labor, he sat in the midst of us, a beloved and benign presence, to make things sunny and light, and to enrich us with the finest gold, while we wrought for that which perisheth.

He brought us flowers for the adornment of the holy temple, and watched with interest as we twined them, and he interspersed, with the perfumes of our garlands, the better incense of hallowed thought, which, even after this long, long time, has not ceased its fragrance.

He pressed our hands as he passed out from among us, and said, "Dear heart! dear heart!" as if the heavenly love so filled his breast that it must needs overflow. And

—best proof of enduring affection—when he could no longer preach, because the fainting flesh was weak, he went daily alone to pray for us before the altar, where we had so often worshiped together. “How can I give you up, my people, my people!” This was the hardest tie to break, so thoroughly was his soul knit unto our souls.

If the retrospect of consecrated hours and sweet communion is happy, how thrice blessed is the looking forward to the eternal union!

Here “we have walked in the house of God as friends, and have taken sweet counsel together.” There we shall dwell forever where is unceasing worship and praise.

Here we have spoken to each other of Him who was slain for our redemption; there we shall follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, and shall continue the wondrous theme that occupied our souls on earth.

Those who have sought holy converse below, will love it above, and will be per-

mitted a perfect communion and fellowship.

It is not strange that we sorrow here, because we see the beloved face no more. It is weary waiting for that which has so often blessed, and strengthened and consoled us. We long for the companionship that is dearest and best, and most like that which the disciples had with our Lord Jesus.

But then, we have not St. John's long, lonely pilgrimage to expect for ourselves. Our age is but a span; at the furthest limit of fourscore years. We are nearly there. Shall we spend the time of our sojourning here in murmurings, because some of our jewels have been taken to adorn the mansion which our dear Lord has gone to prepare for us?

We have not lost the beloved heart, the beloved voice. We can feel it through the skies; we can hear it from the grave.

Our pastor being dead, "yet speaketh." We will rejoice and be glad. We will lift

up our heads, for our redemption draweth
nigh, and we go to meet him whom our
soul loveth.





COMFORT.

“SPEAK low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet
 From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,
 Lest I should fear, and fall, and miss Thee so,
 Who art not missed by any that entreat.
 Speak to me, as to Mary at Thy feet—
 And if no precious gums my hands bestow,
 Let my tears drop like amber, while I go
 In reach of Thy divinest voice complete
 In humanest affection—thus in sooth,
 To lose the sense of losing ! As a child
 Whose song-bird seeks the wood for evermore,
 Is sung to in its stead by mother’s mouth ;
 Till, sinking on her breast, love-reconciled,
 He sleeps the faster that he wept before.”





CHAPTER VII.

“Now, there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.”

TO come to one's last hour without the comfort of this blessed presence, is what I can scarcely conceive of; nor can I imagine the grief of such a loss, excepting by contrast with the joy of such a possession.

A mother's face, the earliest, sweetest remembrance, serene, beautiful, bending over us like the face of an angel. “A mother's kiss, best thing that earthly is.” A mother's tender, watchful care, that surpasses in faithfulness all other charge but that which God gives to those who “bear us in their hands, lest we hurt our foot against a stone.” A

mother's love, likest to the dear love of God, who gave himself to death that we might live. A mother's patience, that bears with our childish whims, and never wearies of our exactions, and listens with untired ear to all our grievances, and puts the heart of sympathy in our little ills and joys, and gives us precept upon precept, that we may not forget the wise monitions, and helps us through all the years by a worthy example.

Think of a "home all fragrant with parental thoughtfulness." A home the image of "Jerusalem the golden." A family that is "part of the whole family in heaven and earth." The mother "holds the little hands in prayer, teaches the weak knees their kneeling," and guides the infant soul through faith in her, to faith in the Divine Parent. It is her province to stamp the first impressions, which last through life.

The old man, come to his hoary years, thinks of the prayer beside his mother's knees; and the aged woman recalls the maternal hand upon her head in blessing, as

her baby tongue used to lisp the sweet words:

“Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.”

This precious mother-influence is felt the world over. The beauty of the Virgin Mary's character is imputed to every pure matron, since that sweet Madonna, whom artists love to paint, and poets to sing, and all hearts to praise, and whom the Holy Ghost calls “Blessed among women.”

Nearly all the worthies of the world, both in ancient and modern times, attribute the good that is in them (under God) to the fostering care of a mother.

It is sweet to owe to her, who by untold pain has brought us into life, the greater part of the joy, and blessedness and value of our existence.

There is no admixture in the love of that dear one who has carried us in her womb, and nourished us from her breast. It is an unnatural mother who does not, under every circumstance, cling to her child. Satan,

rather than God, controls her who would cast away her offspring in sorrow or distress, or even in shame and great wickedness. How dwelleth the love of God in such a mother?

It is toward the wretched and sinful and lost that the Infinite Parent stretches out His hands. To these his beseeching, tender voice calls, "Come unto me," "Not the righteous, but sinners." For them he yearns as never for the safe and undefiled.

And mothers such as she who bore the Lamb of God, will stand by their children, though the world heap contumely upon them, and treat them with utter scorn, and crucify them with eyes that pierce like nails, and words that sting like cruel thorns.

And mothers that have within them the spirit of the blessed Lord Jesus, will find no room in their souls for other than gentlest, most loving thoughts toward those who look to them for next best grace to God's dear smile.

I cannot think of earth without my moth-

er, excepting when I weep with those who weep, and see how the sun is darkened for them, and the flowers seem to bloom no more, and the whole aspect is wintry. Then I say to my heart, "What if this were my very own! She who kissed me so tenderly last night, and said, 'God bless you, my child, and give you happy dreams!'" My friend's beloved mother was sleeping so peacefully, while her daughter wept.

Tears waken her no more. There was a sheaf of wheat upon her coffin, and her white hair, like a crown, encircled her brow. How beautiful she was with that last touch which the angel gives to the Christian dead! Her's was a happy exit; an abundant entrance into the Holy City. And yet I know that much of the glory of this lower world has with her gone from the old homestead, where the children sit yearning to-day. Life is not the same as it used to be when she was here. The lustre is dimmed.

I have another memory that brings to me the possible by and by. A calm, pure face

vanished from those who are very dear to me.

It was on "Holy Week," when we commemorate our Gracious Redeemer's sufferings and death. Fitting season for one who loved Him, to join Him in Paradise!

We were looking forward to Easter, the Resurrection Morn, with holy expectation and delight. The day is always one of great rejoicing. The bright spring flowers adorn the churches, and the children are out with banners and sacred emblems, and sing,

"Green Easter fields!
Fair Easter fields!
Heaven's first ripe fruit
Death conquered yields.
In church-yards wide the seed we sow,
Beneath the Cross the wheat shall grow.
One Easter day death's reign shall end,
And golden sheaves shall heavenward send.
Hail the blest morn by whose glad light
Angels shall reap the harvest white."

Ought that Easter morning to have come to us with less of joy, because our beloved was "asleep in Jesus"?

What if our lot had been cast in an age before the glorious rising of our blessed Saviour!

Then we should have had faint hope of the dawn, and of the blissful awakening, compared with that sure confidence that springs from the open tomb, and the great stone rolled away, and the grave clothes lying, and the angels sitting where the sacred body had been, and Jesus himself speaking with living voice—"Why weepest thou?"

I think the season brought its precious consolation to those whose tears mingled with the Easter smile.

Strange, that when our dear ones walk in white, and carry in their hands victor palms, and sing songs of triumph above, we are clothed in black, and go about mourning, and have no voice for melody!

No. *Not* strange. Ah! how I should miss *my mother*!

No more to go when I am weary, and lay my head upon her breast, and feel her hand stroking my hair, and play the little petted

child again ; no more to seek her wisdom, when my own seems to me such utter folly that I dare not be guided by it ; no more to see her in the old familiar place, where she sits as one enthroned, while “her children rise up and call her blessed ;” no more, when I am sick, to hear her step about the room, and to feel that, though all other light is shut out, “it is not dark where mother is,” and that God seems nearer when she is beside my bed.

And yet, if I were come to my last hour, it would be sad to leave her here, in this cold world. It is rare to find a “beloved disciple” to whom, in our solicitude, we can confide our dearest treasure.

God’s care is over all. “He will provide.” We know that. But even our blessed Lord Jesus went not away, but first He turned his dying eyes toward her who gave him birth, and with his almost latest breath, entrusted His mother to St. John, whom He loved.

I cannot tell which I should choose, with

God's permission, whether to go first, and know, when I am dying, that she will stay to weep—or whether to ask to stand beside my mother, when the angel comes to bear her to the home where tears are wiped away.

The separation is the sorrow, in either event. How short that will be at the longest! And still we bear it impatiently.

I said the other day, "I could endure my mother's absence for all time, if it would bring her rest from wearisome toil, and insure her every earthly luxury and enjoyment."

This makes me think that, when He calls who has all rest, and joy, and peace, and bliss to give, and who has promised it to his beloved, I cannot dare to weep with very bitter grief, though left without the fullness of such joy as children only know through mother's love.

There is one holy comfort: that if I live my mother's "life that has been hid with Christ in God," the time will surely come

when, with that mother dear, and with that Christ who saved His own, and ours and us, and with that God "in whom all fullness dwells," I shall forever live, and "shall be satisfied,"





“THY WILL BE DONE.”

“My God, my Father, while I stray
Far from my home, in life's rough way,
O, teach me from my heart to say
‘Thy will be done.’

“If Thou should'st call me to resign
What most I prize—it ne'er was mine,
I only yield Thee what is thine,
‘Thy will be done.’

“Let but my fainting heart be blest
With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest,
My God, to Thee I leave the rest,
‘Thy will be done.’

“Renew my will, from day to day,
Blend it with thine and take away
All that now makes it hard to say
‘Thy will be done.’”





CHAPTER VIII.

“ Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh.”

AS I head this chapter, there comes a wail from the sea-side that thrills every fibre of my own soul, and makes me faint and tremulous.

“ Drowned on Friday last, sweet Lucy C. Carried out by the treacherous waves with which she was sporting in her innocent mirth. Taken in sight of mother and sister, and friends, in the flush of her youthful beauty, and returned to them white, and cold, and dead.” O, God, have mercy upon us! If I am in bitterness, I who have but met, and loved this precious child, what is not the anguish of those who are bound to her by ho-

liest ties of relationship, and who have known, and felt, the sweet influence of her nineteen summers?

It requires all the faith of a soul that has trusted God from infancy, to accept unquestioningly such a mysterious Providence, and to say through sobs, and wretchedness, "He doeth all things well; " Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

"The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Oh! that such faith, and trust, and comfort, may be vouchsafed those who mourn this beloved one!

• • • • •
A few days since, a little darling, three years old, was playing in the attic of a house near us. He opened the door of a small room that inclosed the skylight. Prattling to his sister about "going to sleep," he stepped upon the glass, and fell through, down, down, striking his head upon the marble floor of the lower hall.

Until four o'clock in the morning he lingered, and then breathed out his little life.

The mother was nearing her eternal home. The child's coffin was brought to the bedside of the dying woman, that she might look upon her baby "gone to sleep."

Who shall say that there was not mercy in this permission of the Good Shepherd for her tender lamb to reach the green pastures before the mother was called.

My friend had a terror of death. He was a faithful Christian minister, and had a good hope of eternal joy in the presence of our dear Lord. Yet there was that natural shrinking from the approach of the last enemy, which, with some temperaments, amounts to monomania.

On his way to a neighboring town, there was a collision of two trains of cars, and the timorous soul was translated to Paradise without one twinge of fear.

How tender towards our infirmities is our Almighty Parent!

.
A beloved cousin dreaded the weariness to herself, and the "trouble to her friends," of a long illness, which she had cause to fear from pulmonary symptoms.

As she walked in the garden, the angel met her, and almost before she could express her thanks for the goodness that called her so speedily, she was in the spirit land.

Can we fail to perceive in these individual providences the watchful care of Him who loves us?

.
A ship freighted with passengers went across the waters toward a distant land. Hearts were buoyant with hope and anticipation. So much of beauty in the far country! So many pleasures!

I met a mourner going about the streets. "Sister, and brother, and child, had gone down in the mighty waters. The ship had foundered with all her passengers. It was too dreadful for heart to bear!

It is dreadful! The soul shrinks from such woe.

But may we not think that, with many, the exchange of the earthly good was for that far country, whose delights shall never fail, and can we not hope that in their dire extremity, as the penitent cried, "Lord save us, we perish," our blessed Lord Jesus Himself came to them walking upon the waters, and lifted them up from the peril of the *eternal deep*, to firm footing upon the Rock of Ages!

.

The house of a good old lady burst into flames in the dead of the night. Mother and daughter were hedged in by a wall of fire. The rest of the inmates escaped. These could not be saved! For a moment there was hope, as one of them stepped upon a balcony, where the firemen might possibly reach her. Love called her back within the window, to be saved, or to perish with her companion. At that instant the roof fell in, and the two were beyond rescue.

It is a fearful thing to the memory of the survivors. And yet who knows but this apparent martyrdom was the sweetest release from the prison of the flesh, and the persecutions of a sinful world!

In the midst of the flames was one walking with them, like unto the Son of Man.

His presence can give cheer and relief in the hour of keenest anguish.

I would not dare to choose the manner of exit from this life. That which we call hard, and bitter, our blessed Lord can make pleasant and sweet. Have not His saints sung praises at the stake, when the spectators were in heaviness? Oh! be sure He forsakes not His beloved in the time of need. No torment can touch them but at His will, and what He willeth is for our good in all things.

Yes, and what He permits shall work together for our good, if we love Him and try to keep His holy law.

That which man's carelessness brings, of sudden destruction, is the most sorrowful ill to bear—the calamities that put a whole

community into mourning; but the overruling Power, that has not seen fit to avert the evil, makes us patient and submissive at thought of God, while we condemn the carelessness of men.

.
Kneeling at prayer, in her chamber, a woman was found dead. How blessed! that the breath of life should go out with the breath of devotion!

To those of her relatives who linger here, the association is full of joy.

But the Christian soul is praying without ceasing, if it obeys the Heavenly law, and we may think of it under this aspect, though it may be cut off in the midst of what may appear most incongruous occupation.

The work that God sets us to do in the world, is, in His sight, worship, and while our hands do it, with all their might, our spirits may soar as near to His throne of Grace, as if we were on bended knee in the secrecy of our closet.

An old man went daily to the market-place to sell his vegetables. He took advantage of no one, but was just and upright in all his dealings. He was up before the light to gather his produce, and plodded a long weary way to town, and spent the dull hours amid the strife of tongues, and the jostlings of busy people. His mind was set on treasure above, and what labor here procured, went to the support and comfort of his orphan grandchildren. One day the stall held a silent occupant, and the noisy people were hushed for the moment with awe, and the grandchildren were for a second time orphaned.

Another man, as aged, was every morning in the house of God, joining in the prayers and praises. His seat was never vacant. On Wednesday the clergyman was about to begin the service, when he saw his old friend sinking down upon the floor, and going to him he held him in his arms, and received his last sigh.

Despite the outward view, these two

cases are equal in sublimity. If death but finds us in the way of duty, with our hearts set on God and things Divine, he cannot come upon us unawares, or suddenly. It is only an unprepared soul that is *surprised*.

And for us, who mourn the quick departure of beloved ones, it ought to be some consolation that they have escaped the trial of days and weeks of suffering.

It is natural to desire last words, and sacred communings, and parting endearments that we may have to dwell upon, when we yearn in vain for the real presence; but if we could be unselfish, we should wish to spare our dear ones the rending of heart from heart, and should rejoice that they step immediately from earth to Paradise, where they look for our coming to meet them in glory.

It is very sad to watch the wasting away of the flesh, and the gradual but sure decay of one whom we dearly love.

“ Ah ! to wait for death !
To see one's idol with the signature

Of the destroyer stamped upon the brow,
And know that it is doomed beyond all hope ;
To watch it while it fades ; to see the form
That once was beauty's own, become a corpse
In all but breathing, and to meet the eyes
A hundred times a day—while the heart bleeds—
With smiles of smooth dissembling, and with words
Cheerful as morning, and to do all this
Through weeks, and weary months, till one half
longs
To see the spell dissolved, and feel the worst
That death can do : Can there be misery
Sadder than this?"

Neither for myself, nor for those whom
God has given me, will I choose what shall
be.

"Why should I choose? for in thy love
Most surely I descry
A gentler death than I myself
Should dare to ask to die?

But when, or where, or by what pain,
All this is one to me ;
I only long for such a death
As most will honor thee.

Long life dismays me, by the sense
Of my own weakness scared ;
And by thy Grace, a sudden death
May not be unprepared.

One wish is hard to be unwished,—
That I at least might die
Of grief for having wronged with sin
Thy spotless majesty.”

Have our precious ones been taken from
us by violence? Do we feel that no suffer-
ing has been equal to theirs, and no sorrow
equal to ours.

Behold the Lamb of God.
Behold the Cross.



NOT KNOWING.

" I KNOW not what shall befall me,
God hangs a mist o'er my eyes,
And each step in my onward path
He makes new scenes to rise,
And every joy He sends me
Comes as a sweet surprise.

Oh, restful, blissful ignorance !
'Tis blessed not to know ;
It keeps me still in those arms
Which will not let me go,
And hushes my soul to rest
In the bosom that loved me so !

So I go on—not knowing ;
I would not if I might,
Rather walking with God in the dark
Than going alone in the light ;
Rather walking with Him by faith
Than walking alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from trials
Which the future may disclose,
Yet I never had a sorrow
But what the dear Lord chose ;
So I send the coming tears back
With the whispered word—'*He knows.*' "



CHAPTER IX.

“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I shall rise out of the earth in the last day, and shall be covered again with my skin, and shall see God in my flesh; yea and I myself shall behold Him, not with other, but with these same eyes.”

I HAVE chosen the ancient translation of these precious verses from the book of Job, because it seems so especially to convey the idea of “a particular resurrection of this very body,” which is the doctrine of the majority of the Christian world.

From my babyhood have I been taught the consoling truth, that when we lay our beloved ones down in the dust of the earth, it is

not to an eternal sleep; that as part of the creature made in God's own image, the body as well as the soul, shall, through the body and blood of our crucified Redeemer, be preserved unto everlasting life; that although because of the transgression of the first Adam, it must see corruption, and so be purged of the mortal element begotten of sin, yet by the righteousness of the second Adam, it shall be restored to its primitive condition before God.

It would seem superfluous to attempt to strengthen this fact in the minds of men, but for the false notion entertained by some, that the body that shall be after the Resurrection, is altogether of an ethereal nature, and has nothing to do with the tabernacle of clay, in which we have sojourned here below.

To me the thought is too sad to have one moment's lodgment within my breast. I repel it as I would any other heresy.

I go back to the old Scripture testimony concerning Enoch whom God translated, and Elijah whom he received up into the clouds

in the very form that was familiar to the eyes of Israel. But I dwell with exceeding joy and trust, upon the transaction of eighteen hundred years ago at Bethany, when the Lord Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven with the very body that bore the cruel imprint of the nails and the spear, the very body that had lain in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, the very body that had come forth from the sepulchre, and had been handled by the disciples to test if it were a spirit, or really flesh and bones.

Oh! there is conviction in this spectacle of the Perfect Man going up, body and soul, to the right hand of the Majesty on High! There needs no other proof that we too shall rise, and stand in the presence of God, "clothed upon," with this garb of flesh, which we put off at death, and take on again at the last great day, "like unto His own glorious body."

Think what honor has come to us men, and to us women, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who was "made in the likeness of a

man," and was "born of a pure virgin." Is not this body so sanctified and ennobled by this image and indwelling, that it can never perish?

I will give no answer to the infidel philosopher who meets me with the suggestion, "Once in seven years does every particle of the human frame change; that which you are now you were not seven years ago; that which you are now, you shall not be seven years hence." What matters it? "God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed His own body."

The hand that created, can restore. The scattered particles, freed from the corruptible element, may all be brought together once more, to compose the resurrection body.

I care nothing for scientific arguments. The faith of a little child can put the most plausible aside, by the simple words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The lips of the Christian, yes, and the lips of the impenitent, cry out,

“Almighty God,” and in this ejaculation is an acknowledgment that all things are possible to Him with whom we have to do. I thank God the Holy Ghost, for such precious revelations as have come to us through the inspired book; the record of the raising of Lazarus and the widow’s son, and of the damsel, all of whom our Lord Jesus *restored to their friends* in the old beloved garb—the earnest of that glad re-union when He shall awake us out of our long sleep, and give us back to each other, heart to heart, and face to face. Oh! the safeguard of this consciousness that this very body must stand in the presence of God and of His holy angels! Who dare defile that which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and is made to glorify God? Shall these feet go in the way of sinners, and add more pangs to that “*via dolorosa*,” trodden by the pierced feet, for our redemption! Shall these hands be stretched out in greediness of worldly gain, or honor, or pleasure, when the sacred hands were only outspread to heal and bless.

Shall this body be given up to worldly lusts and passions, and made food for the worm that never dieth? How shall it ever "be like unto His glorious body," unless we strive with all our might to keep ourselves pure from the defilements of earth? "Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies." Our feet must be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. How beautiful this will make them! Our hands must hold ever by the Divine hand, and cling to the Cross of Christ, lest unclean hands grasp and soil them, and things less sacred than the crucifixion tree, claim our embrace.

This body must be washed in the laver of regeneration, that the stain of the old birth may be removed, and that our Lord may be satisfied with the travail of His soul.

Shall we disappoint Him who is "the Saviour of the body," as well as of the soul?

At what cost did he not redeem it?

Oh! that it may "be preserved blameless unto His coming!"

Oh! that we may "glorify God in" it;

It is with a view of the sacredness of the body, that we pay such honor to our dead. We wrap them in fine linen, and put costly perfumes about them. We sit beside them watching, so long as we can have them near. We bear them gently to the grave, with holy words and solemn hymns. We “hide them in our mother’s lap, and cover them with her skirt.”

We erect monuments to their memory, and go often to their lowly bed, and recount to each other their virtues.

From the sweet German author I gather the precious thought that possibly this tribute of love and respect for our sleeping dead, is not unobserved by their departed spirits. Husband and wife are looking down from above, upon the burial ground. The husband says, “The place is familiar to me, it is the church-yard where I placed thy mortal part, which was given back to the earth. The place became dear to me; I often sought it, and kneeling upon the grave,

raised my eyes hitherward, where we both are now.

“Among beautiful trees and flowers, I thought, may she be wandering *there*; among trees and flowers shall her body rest *here*. So a flower-garden and a wilderness of blossoms sprang up, and every beautiful thing which the anniversary brought with it adorned thy grave.”

The wife responds—

“I knew it well; look thitherward now. What seest thou?”

“Near thy grave another is open, the church-yard gate stands open, a corpse is borne forward; our children follow. Do ye weep, loved hearts, so bitterly? Could ye see us as we see you, ye would not weep, or at the most only for longing. The body—*my* body—is lowered; now they cast a handful of dust upon the coffin. The grave is closed; now rests my dust by thine. Go home now, ye loved ones, and may the fore-taste of that heavenly peace which we enjoy, glide to your souls. But return hitherward

often, and seek the grave of your old parents. When ye meet and pray there, we will be near you, and bring you heavenly gifts from the Lord. Henceforth take His hand as ye go. He will guide you safely. Your old parents have proved this! And one day will He bring us all together again."

"Amen. Thus it will surely be."



THIS BODY.

“Dust to dust, it minglcth well among the sacred soil ;
It is scattered by the winds, it is wafted by the waves ; it
 mixeth with herbs and cattle ;
But God hath watched these morsels, and hath guided
 them in care :
Each waiting soul must claim his own, when the Arch-
 angel soundeth,
And all the fields, and all the hills, shall move, a mass
 of life.
Bodies numberless crowding on the land, and covering
 the trampled sea,
Darkening the air precipitate, and gathered scatheless
 from the fire ;
The Himalayan peaks shall yield their charge, and the
 desolate steppes of Siberia,
The Maelstrom disengulph its spoil, and the iceberg
 manumit its captive.
All shall teem with life, the converging fragments of
 humanity,
Till every conscious essence greet his individual frame ;
For, in some dignified similitude, alike, yet different in
 glory,
This body shall be shaped anew, fit dwelling for the soul.
The hovel hath grown to a palace, the bulb hath burs
 into a flower ;
Matter hath put on incorruption, and is at peace with
 the spirit.”



CHAPTER X.

“I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”

WITHOUT the Lord Jesus, his dying and living again, life is but death, its march a march to the grave.

“Born to die” is the single truth fulfilled in our existence.

The first and last step, every uncertain tread of the babe, every bright leap of the boy, every hopeful advance of youth, every confident stride of manhood, every totter of age, are so much toward the goal, death.

What a dismal prospect! What a sad history, if these be all! Life received only to be given up after a few painful breathings, or be-

fore intellect is sufficiently developed to appreciate a single happiness or treasure of earth, or when the arms are full of assured hope, before the bitterness and stings, which often accompany possession, exist, or when children and dear friends are making this earthly estate but too happy ; all which we get and hold, a fictitious story, which fills an idle hour, or beguiles a weary day, but has no truth-fastened anchor in its past, and reaches out to no possession in its future.

Thus the psalmist sadly moans, " We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told."

Death is to be contemplated not alone through the glass of nature, and of time, or the searchings of science ; not alone as an universal submission to an original doom.

The Gospel, and the hope full of immortality, abide at the door of the sepulchre ; not inverted torches, but fires blazing upward toward Heaven, and throwing their light back into the night already far spent.

He who looks over earth, too truly likened to the desert in which Israel's children

wandered till they fell, and sees that its dust has been seven times turned, till death covers death, and yet would mark beyond dying generations, One that remains living and immortal, must take his stand at the centre of humanity, on Mount Calvary, the only mound which records a conqueror of death in the Lord of Life, in Jesus prophesied as the Father of Eternities. "He hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel."

"Now sinners may die, for the Sinless hath died."

As soon as "sin had brought death into the world and all our woe" the promise of restoration was made.

"The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." There was added the revelation, "The serpent shall bruise his heel."

The figure is of a combat, in which, after receiving one painful, yet curable wound, the champion treads the foe down into dishonorable defeat, and utter annihilation.

That promised Seed is the Lord Jesus

Christ, who, through death, destroyed him that had the power of death. Yet the seed is our human nature, and, aided by the Divine Spirit, we, one and all, may be conquerors, and more than conquerors over the last enemy.

If our Divine Lord had not interposed, if God had not made Himself the Seed of the woman, death had been completest death; the body had been dissolved forever, dust to dead dust, and the spirit had passed out into a wretchedness without cessation or remedy.

Every human being now shares the Lord's immortal existence. "Through Christ shall all be made alive."

This life-creating efficiency is not confined to those who took mortality after the resurrection of our Lord had girded it about with immortality. The balances of God have not those frequent time-notches which mark ours.

When the Lord made bare His mighty arm for so wondrous salvation, He stretched

it backward over the four thousand years, to the olden Paradise, as well as forward across the Millennial degrees which separate us from the new Paradise. The gaze with faith to the coming Messiah, and that with memory, to the Messiah come and gone, pass through one vari-colored prism, the promises of God, and side by side, go out into a sure and glorious hope, to be realized at the second advent.

There is a sense in which death reigns. A few days or years hence, we too, now active, and full of life, shall feel the cold touch of his iron sceptre. Thanks be to God, there abides, before and after that touch, a comfortable sense in which death is actually and utterly abolished, since "he that liveth and believeth in the Lord shall never die."

"There is no death, what seems so is transition ;
This life, of mortal breath,
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian
Whose portal we call death."

Even that reign of death which exists, and

presses upon our meaner part, is greatly changed and lightened since the grand transactions of Good-Friday and Easter. We tremble less at its claim. Its degradation is substantially lost. Its demand for instantaneous submission is postponed. The Cross with its back-reaching arm, first of all purchased the redemption of forfeited time, and grants to mortals a longer or shorter period before the spirit can be crowded from the body. Except for the Lord, and His Gospel, our first father had fallen lifeless at the very threshold of Eden, and there had been no blood of Abel to cry out against the violence of death. Except for the Lord and His Gospel, the human race had been swallowed in the first swoop of the cherubic sword guarding the tree of life.

The first golden pieces of the atonement were paid for these passing moments, so often treated as an enemy by those who would "kill time;" so often wasted or thrown away.

The shining of the sun on all alike; the

falling of the rain; the sweet breath of the wind; the incense and cheer, and beauty, and wealth of earth around us; sympathy and love; every comfort and joy which is gathered from our fellow pilgrims toward the grave; these tell part of the riches of the first golden pieces in the price of atonement.

As a physical change, this event that comes to all, has been lightened by Christianity, its institutions, and its effects. Skill in medicine and surgery reach their higher stages of growth, only beneath the Gospel. The charity which takes Lazarus from the porch of the selfish rich man, and gives him almost a mother's, or a sister's care, is of the spirit which is from above. The savage and negligent have been softened, and roused to the rule, "As ye would from others, even so do." As a physical change, the pains and strangeness of failure unto death, are alleviated by the company of Christians; the support of their arms, the soothing of their hands, the cheer of their voices; these reach even

into the last hour, and eyes, till they close on earth, look into eyes which beam with love, because they reflect the Lord, and the sinking tabernacle is laid down by arms all the more gently, because underneath them are the arms of the Lord's love. It is as if these golden angels, ("Angels" our English ancestors called the golden pieces of highest value in commerce,) the price of the Redeemer's love, had been sent over earth to purchase hearts, and minds, and care, and bend them to the relief of the dying man.

What science calls natural alleviations are bought also by the Lord, but are not here numbered. Some of these are unconsciousness of infancy, such immaturity in the mind of childhood that it cannot dread the recurrence of pain, or the coming of stifled breathing; such pressure of sickness as forbids thought, or sensation; and the years in which the grasshopper is a burden.

That Grand Easter, the last day, with the most mighty miracle of the universe, the general resurrection, shall number the resi-

due of the gold pieces of our Lord's sacrifice for our bodies. We shall note the patient sentries, who have kept watch over their dust; the celestial physician through whom the "bruised heel" is recovered, and the searching detectives who leave not a particle of mortality as trophy, with him who styled himself all conqueror, but who sinks beneath our long-feeble arm.

Alleviate the evil, promise its entire removal, yet fear of death remains—is universal.

Even St. Paul, who could shout at the edge of the sword of martyrdom, "I am ready to be offered up," confesses a shudder.

"Not that we would be unclothed; but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

He would, if possible, escape the stepping down; would leap across the grave. Translation rather than death, if the Lord will so appoint, is his desire. This dread forms a large element in the description, "He hath delivered them who through fear

of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." To the doubts and uncertainties created by our sin and weakness, and crowding as awful spectres about the close of life, the reformers of the English church refer in a prayer at the burial of the dead that "for no fears of death we fall from Christ," and in a supplication of the Litany, "In the hour of death, good Lord deliver us." While we are the weak tempted mortals that we are, we shall have need of these petitions.

There have been indeed, profligate men, bold women, who have met death with a calmness the disciple often fails to attain. To the end of the world, there shall be such.

Humble and sensitive faith realizes that the events created by sin are terrible. Therefore it crouches as from a blast in the shadow of the Cross, or clings to it, as in the heavy rain the tender plant to the oak.

There are few Christians who have not at some time, looked toward death with heavy anxiety. Even, when right thought and con-

siderations overpower it, they do not always annul it.

“ I have a sin of fear that when I’ve spun my last thread, I shall perish on that shore.”

There remains no doubt that the unsoothed conscience, past guilt, the approach of judgment, and of eternity, waken the chiefest forebodings, and frame the monster of fear.

“ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.”

Let the heart be assured that the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed it from all defilement; let the hope be confident that the name is upon the book of life, and death, like a mountain pass of the Alps, the hither side of roughness and cold gone over, is into lands of summer suns and southern winds, into vales where bliss and rest abide. Death becomes relief; the laying down of duty, the taking up of reward. “ For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

God in His wise love, may leave the fear of death to haunt the earlier part and the

height of life, as the Amorites and the Canaanites were suffered to dwell for generations in the conquered land of promise. We need caution and seriousness while we are compassed by temptations. Where the glitter of worldliness is abroad, and all tends to seduce us into contentment with earth as home, something must persuade us to number our days, or we shall not apply our hearts to wisdom. Take away from sleep every trace of the image of that death in which our sin has involved us, and how few of us will be urgent each night :

“Teach me to live that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed.”

As the event approaches, and the attractions of the world loose their hold, strangeness disappears, naturalness comes on, anxiety lessens. A shudder, a struggle for courage may yet exist, as when one awaits the surgeon's knife, and knows not how much pain he must endure ; or as when a woman draws near her travail. In these instances, relief and joy are confidently expected, as

the results of accepted agony. So under the pledge of the Lord Jesus, death is to establish eternal health, and to open to the spirit, pleasures which cannot fade. From a sight beyond the dark river, will come back glad courage to enter its unknown depths. As the close of earth is neared, faith will possess daily more of sight; be better able to recognize arms of angels lifting the accepted of the Lord, and their shields repelling spiritual adversaries. If faith embrace the promise, "I will never, no never, no never leave thee," the disciple shall shout, "I am persuaded that death shall not separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Faith has often looked at and beyond a death known to be exceedingly painful.

With an air almost of playful cheerfulness, one of the martyrs in the reign of Queen Mary, as he was going across familiar English meadows to the stake, already in sight, said, "But two stiles more to climb, and I shall be at the porch of Heaven."

An eminent minister of the Church of England, a hundred years later, declared, "These last hours have nothing terrible in them; my body suffers, and is weak, but my soul is strong and joyful." Two hundred years more, and tortures from desperate sickness were soothed by a spirit which could thus speak, "At even time it is light. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

Yes, the observation of every Christian minister, marks men, from whom philosophical firmness, or constitutional courage is least to be expected, triumphing over life-long fear, and stepping without a falter across the line of the shadow of death. Let none who recalls his long career of sin; his short course of imperfect religiousness; his oft forgotten resolutions; his aspirations, from whose pursuit he has retired, presume to demand of God the dispelling clouds and apprehensions; the making the last hours bright and triumphant. It is enough if the Lord secure our safety, and grant any kind of entrance

into His everlasting kingdom. Some may sail with spread canvas and flying pennants into port; some on boards, or broken pieces of the ship, may get safely to land.

Yet so often is the pillow of death made soft; the conscience quieted; the hope rejoiced by prospect of speedy possession, that we do anticipate for the disciple, quiet and contentment, if not high degrees of triumph. Tens of thousands of ordinary weak saints have proved the last day of earth a festal day; have laid down the tired or racked body,

“As gladly as the storm-beat traveler,
Who having reached his destined place of shelter
Drops at the door his mantle’s cumbrous weight.”

What then is the transaction death, to him who is sustained by the Grace of the Lord Jesus? It is the laying of the body inside the circle of the resurrection; the sowing it as seed within the Lord’s acre, that weakness may grow into power, dishonor into glory, mortality into immortality.

It is a simple event in the life of the spirit,

not sleep, not fainting, not insensibility, not interruption; merely a passage, a change of place. That spirit has been united with the body; it is alone, and has its own proper manifestation. That spirit has been immersed in infirmity; it is where no sickness, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain, nor death can exist.

With respect both to body and soul, the destroying agent, as in much of the chemistry of earth, is become a creator. Death is regeneration; the riddle of life no longer perplexes us, or taxes the guesses of the intellect, but is splendidly solved.

“Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong comes forth sweetness.”

Certainty, fixed certainty begins, if not earlier, the moment the veil is lifted.

Such as we pass beneath that veil, we abide through eternity.

“No more of doubt where all is true,
No death to close the longing view,
No dream of future tears.”

The complete conquest of the last enemy,

the perfection of humanity in our living again, shall be when the Lord shall bring forth the Easter top-stone, with shoutings of "Grace, Grace, unto it."

Body and soul shall be again and forever united. As it was at the beginning, so it shall be at the end. The Lord Alpha and Omega. The Lord all in all. We shall be permitted to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. In His joy, we shall find joy, and on the banks of the river of life, shall forget that there ever flowed at our feet, dark waters of Death.



D E A T H .

“ Death, thou wast once an uncouth hideous thing,
Nothing but bones,
The sad effect of sadder grones ;
Thy mouth was open, but thou couldst not sing.

For we considered Thee as at some six
Or ten years hence,
After the losse of life and sense,
Flesh being turned to dust, and bones to sticks.

We lookt on this side of thee, shooting short ;
Where we did finde
The shels of fledge souls left behinde,
Dry dust which sheds no tears, but may extort.

But since our Saviour’s death did put some bloud
Into thy face ;
Thou art grown fair, and full of grace,
Much in request, much sought for, as a good.

For we do now behold thee gay and glad
As at dooms-day,
When souls shall wear their new array
And all thy bones with beauty shall be clad.

Therefore we can go die as sleep, and trust
Half that we have
Unto an honest faithful grave ;
Making our pillow either down, or dust.”





“And behold I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

“Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.”

“Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately.”



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